

EASTLAND KNOWN AS CRANKY BOAT TO ALL BUT COMPANY OFFICIALS

The Eastland long before it laid over on its side and dropped 2,500 helpless people into the river was known as a cranky boat. Yet W. K. Greenebaum, manager of the Indiana Transportation Co., which chartered the Eastland for the Western Electric picnic, says he didn't know that.

And Walter C. Steele, secretary and principal stockholder in the St. Joseph-Chicago Steamship Co., which bought the Eastland for a song after the people of Cleveland refused to ride on her, says he never was told that the vessel was cranky.

So Steele's company bought the Eastland very cheaply and ran it between St. Joseph and Chicago. And Greenebaum, when the Western Electric employees told him they would need boats for their picnic on the 24th of July, chartered the boat for the day.

Greenebaum told Daniel Gee, who made arrangements for the picnic crowd, that he must know whether they would have more than 2,500 passengers before July 1.

Gee told him about July 1 that they would have at least 4,500 and probably more. Then application was made for a passenger allowance of 2,500, or 300 more.

And Rob't Reid, inspector, whose son-in-law held down a fat job as engineer of the boat, attached his name to a license granting the transportation company the right to pack the boat with 2,500 souls.

This in spite of the fact that every disinterested man connected with lake boats who testified before the coroner's jury yesterday said that the boat was known to be cranky long before arrangements were made to haul a mass of women and children.

W. J. Wood, marine architect, aided in repairing the boat in 1903. He told the former owners of the boat that work on the craft had not been done in the interests of the

owners.

Later he met W. H. Hull, manager of the St. Joseph Steamship Co., and told him that the boat was a cranky one and needed repairs. His offer of assistance was turned down.

Adam F. Weckler, harbor master, told the coroner's jury that he knew the boat was cranky and that it had listed several times when coming into the river. He refused to let it throw off the lines with the load it was carrying. It sank a few minutes later. He declared the steamer should not have been allowed to carry more than 1,200 people.

Joseph R. Lind, assistant to Weckler, said that the boat was a dangerous one and it was commonly known among seamen. He remarked to Weckler that it was a shame to let the Eastland go out last Saturday with the load she carried. The craft turned over a half hour later.

Cap't John O'Mara of the tug Kenosha said he had seen the Eastland list before and he knew it was a cranky boat.

The Eastland's ballast pumps were not in condition to send water into the tanks was another theory presented to the coroner's jury.

Weckler told the jury that "if the machinery was in shape and the engines working right, the pumps should have trimmed the boat in from 3 to 6 minutes." Ericson admitted that he was trimming the boat 17 minutes before she capsized.

Wood, the marine architect, rapped Reid, the local inspector, for increasing the capacity of the boat because a few life rafts and life preservers had been added to the craft's equipment at the request of Hull, just before the big picnic was expected.

"The capacity of a boat is figured from the number of square feet of deck space which she has," declared Wood. "The addition of life rafts would lessen the capacity."